Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 STR-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 FEA-01 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 ITC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 XMB-02 OPIC-03 /093 W

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R 281541Z JAN 77 FM AMEMBASSY BONN TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5148 INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EEC, PR, GW SUBJECT: 2-NITROPROPANE

REF: (A) STATE 12383; (B) 76 BONN 18660

1. ECONOMICS MINISTRY OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR CUSTOMS POLICY QUESTIONS (HOERIG) TOLD EMBOFF JANUARY 26 THAT HE SAW NO POSSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING A TARIFF REDUCTION ON 2-NITROPROPANE UNDER ARTICLE 28. FIRST OF ALL, HE NOTED, INVOCATION OF ARTICLE 28 CAN BE DONE ONLY ON THE BASIS OF A PROPOSAL BY THE COMMISSION, AND THE COMMISSION HAS NEVER BEEN WILLING TO PROPOSE THAT THE QUALIFIED MAJORITY PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 28 BE USED WITH RELATION TO A SINGLE PRODUCT. THE FRG HAD PREVIOUSLY TRIED TO OBTAIN A 20 PERCENT REDUCTION OF ALL COMMUNITY TARIFFS AS A MEANS TO FIGHT INFLATION, BUT HAD NEVER SUCCEEDED IN OBTAINING A QUALIFIED MAJORITY TO SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE. IN HOERIG'S VIEW, EFFORTS TO USE ARTICLE 28 FOR INDIVIDUAL ITEMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WOULD RECEIVE EVEN LESS SUPPORT FROM THE MEMBER STATES.

2. HOERIG FURTHER SAID THAT THE FRG WOULD NOT FOR ITS PART WANT TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE FRENCH BY TRYING TO INVOKE ARTICLE 28. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESENT PROCEDURE FOR GRANTING TARIFF SUSPENSIONS HAS BEEN IN EFFECT ON A REGULAR BASIS FOR ONE THE PAST TWO OR

THREE YEARS. UNDER THIS PROCEDURE, IT HAS BECOME ESTABLISHED PRACTICE THAT IF ONE MEMBER COUNTRY BEGINS PRODUCTION OF A PARTICULAR PRODUCT, THE OTHER MEMBER STATES THENCEFORTH REFRAIN FROM EXERTING ANY PRESSURE TO MAINTAIN THE DUTY SUSPENSION. THIS HAS BEEN TRUE EVEN FOR CASES IN WHICH COMMUNITY PRODUCTION HAS NOT BEEN SUFFICIENT, SUCH AS WITH 2-NITROPROPANE. AS THE MEMBER STATE MOST INTERESTED IN THE BENEFITS OF TARIFF SUSPENSIONS, THE FRG WOULD NOT AT ALL WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO ENDANGER THIS PRACTICE.

3. EMBASSY RECALLS THAT ARTICLE 25 WAS DESIGNED FOR USE DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD FOR THE FORMATION OF THE ORIGINAL CUSTOMS UNION, AND HAS NOT BEEN INVOKED SINCE. WHILE ARTICLE 28 HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY RESCINDED, EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT EFFORTS TO INVOKE IT WOULD HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF SUCCESS, PARTICULARLY IN THE ABSENCE OF STRONG FRG SUPPORT.

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